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ABSTRACT

The monograph reports on research from primary sources about Queensland's Itinerant Teacher Service from 1901 to 1930. Chapter One traces its history and shows that the Service was inaugurated in 1901 with 1 teacher visiting 103 homesteads having 319 children, reached its peak in 1921 with 18 teachers visiting 1,889 children, and declined until the latter half of the 1920's when it was replaced by the Primary Correspondence School. Tables indicate districts and square miles served, distances traveled, number of children and families served, and number of visits in various years. Chapter Two describes how the Service operated, how teachers moved from homestead to homestead by horse and buggy and later on, by motor car or motorcycle, setting work to be done before their next visit and correcting work done since their last visit. It also describes hardships teachers encountered. The final chapter assesses the contribution of the Itinerant Teacher Service to early Queensland rural education. It is found that although it had its limitations, it did bring a degree of literacy and numeracy to the children of isolated areas and "paved the way" for the smooth induction of a more sophisticated system of rural education, the Primary Correspondence School. (Author/NEC)

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The Itinerant Teacher Service

QUEENSLAND 1901-1930

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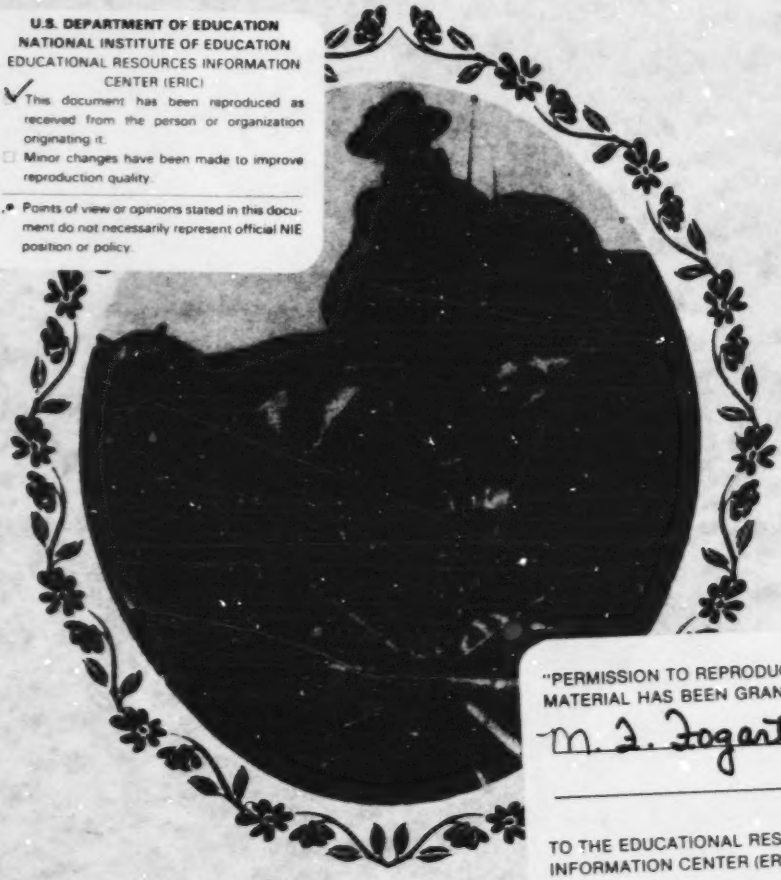

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THE ITINERANT TEACHER SERVICE
Queensland 1901-1930

M. FOGARTY

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FOREWORD

Queensland is developing as a large State with immense distances to be covered. At the same time, an increasing proportion of children have direct access to schools in a relatively small number of towns and cities. This development has been accelerated by technological change bringing improved roads and transport facilities which have resulted progressively in the closure of small country schools and the busing of children to larger centres. Yet, at the same time, there is an awakened awareness of the needs of the isolated child and the concept of *distance education* has again recently been to the forefront in educational considerations.

In this context, this monograph on the early history of the itinerant teacher will be of special interest to a variety of groups ranging through the spectrum of those simply interested in the past to those who are currently involved in making better provision for the education of isolated children.

G.R. Streets,
BRISBANE COLLEGE OF ADVANCED EDUCATION

CONTENTS

		Page
PREFACE		1
CHAPTER ONE:	History of the Itinerant Teacher Service	7
CHAPTER TWO:	Operation of the Itinerant Teacher Service	27
CHAPTER THREE:	Contribution to Education of the Itinerant Teacher Service	39
BIBLIOGRAPHY		61

PREFACE

This monograph reports on research into an area that, to me, is an interesting and colourful aspect of Queensland's early educational history, the itinerant teacher service.

The study has two objectives. Firstly, to provide information about the Service, and secondly, to assess its contribution to rural education in the early part of this century. It has been divided into three chapters.

The first chapter traces its history and shows that it was inaugurated in 1901 with one teacher, reached its peak in 1921 when there were eighteen itinerant teachers, and after that, slowly at first, but then quite rapidly, declined. By the latter half of the 1920's, it had been replaced by the Primary Correspondence School.

Chapter Two describes how the Service operated, how teachers moved from homestead to homestead in their horses and buggies and later on, in their motor cars or on their motor cycles, setting work to be done before their next visit and correcting work done since their last visit. It also describes the hardships that they encountered on the way.

The final chapter assesses the contribution of the itinerant teacher service to early Queensland rural education. It is found that although it had its limitations, it did bring a degree of literacy and numeracy to the children of isolated areas and "paved the way" for the smooth induction of a more sophisticated system of rural education, the Primary Correspondence School.

The conclusions drawn should be viewed with a degree of caution because of the nature of the materials researched.

M.F. Fogarty

Giving tuition during a visit to a homestead.

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CHAPTER 1

HISTORY OF THE ITINERANT TEACHER SERVICE

1. INTRODUCTION

This study of Queensland's itinerant teacher service was undertaken because there appears to be very little written concerning this aspect of early education in the State. Its major aims are to provide information about the service and to assess its contribution to education.

The information on which this study is based was gathered almost entirely from primary sources. These included:

Votes and Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly;
Queensland Parliamentary Papers;
Files lodged at the Queensland Archives;
Education Office Gazettes; and
Queensland Teachers' Union Journals.

The study is divided into three chapters. The first deals with the history of the service between the years 1901 and 1930. These dates encompass the period between its induction and eventual decline. Chapter Two describes how the service operated, how teachers moved from homestead to homestead and so on. In Chapter Three, an attempt is made to assess the contribution of the itinerant teacher service to Queensland education.

2. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SERVICE

At the turn of the current century, the Queensland Department for Public Instruction[1] was attempting to provide education for all by establishing provisional schools[2] wherever a group of a dozen children could be gathered together under the one roof. Despite their efforts, they were not achieving their ideal. There was still a number of isolated families that could not be reached by any system of schools. One alternative was the appointment of a State-paid tutor to such families, but the resultant cost of such an operation "ruled it out of the question":

> *The expense of providing a teacher or tutor for each family would be prohibitive, even if it were desirable as a matter of policy.*[3]

In 1901, it was decided to trial what appeared to be a more suitable alternative, money-wise and policy-wise. A travelling teacher was appointed and it was his duty to move from homestead to homestead, in isolated areas of the State, setting work for the children to do before his next visit, and in time, correcting work done since his last visit. The travelling teacher was given the official designation, "Itinerant Teacher".

> *Notwithstanding the multiplication of provisional schools to provide the means of education to children in*

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1 The Department For Public Instruction was re-designated the Department of Education in the mid-1950's.

2 Provisional schools were established in areas where the inhabitants could demonstrate to the Department for Public Instruction that they had the necessary minimum enrolment for a school. Where approval for a school was given, the inhabitants provided the building and the Department provided the teacher. Provisional schools became State Schools when it could be shown that the school population was stable and permanent and warranted the cost involved in the Department's maintaining the current school building or in its erecting a new one.

3. Queensland Parliament, "31st Report of the Secretary for Public Instruction for the Year 1906", *Queensland Parliamentary Papers 1907*. p. 10.

the bush, wherever a group of a dozen can be collected, there still remain isolated families containing one or more children of school age beyond the reach of any school. To meet their case as far as practicable, my predecessor appointed an itinerant officer, from 1st January, 1901, whose duty it is to visit isolated homes in the south-western district.[4]

Queensland's first itinerant teacher was a Mr Johnson who, in 1901, visited 103 homesteads that housed 113 families having 319 children of school age. His territory stretched from Hebel to Adavale and from Hungerford to Maranoa.

At the end of the 1904 school year, Mr Johnson resigned as itinerant teacher to take up an Assistant Teacher's[5] post at Townsville. His replacement was a Mr Walpole, who, in 1905, covered 3,274 miles in the performance of his duties.

In 1907, two additional Itinerant Teachers were appointed. Mr W.T. West used Longreach as his centre while Mr J. Hunter worked west and south-west from Hughenden. There were now three travelling teachers, but because of the long distances they were required to travel, they were unable, in most cases, to visit each family more than once a year.

Under the existing arrangements, it is only possible for the Itinerant Teacher to pay about one visit per annum to each family.[6]

One visit per year was thought to be insufficient and it was held that if the system were to operate effectively and efficiently, a minimum of four such visits should be made annually. To effect this, provision

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4. Queensland Parliament, "25th Report of the Secretary for Public Instruction for the Year 1900", *Votes and Proceeding of the Legislative Assembly 1901*. p. 6.

5. Now designated Staff Teacher.

6. Queensland Parliament, "32nd Report of the Secretary for Public Instruction for the Year 1907", *Queensland Parliamentary Papers 1908*. p. 10.

was made on the Estimates of 1907-8 for the appointment of nine additional Itinerant Teachers:

> *So that the whole of our territory in the sparsely-settled districts of the South-west, Central-west, and North-west may be visited at least four times a year, and the visit be of longer duration than can be arranged at present, provision has been made on the Estimates of 1907-8 for the appointment of nine additional teachers.*[7]

The full complement of Itinerant Teachers was now twelve. Diagram One shows the districts that were worked by travelling teachers in 1909.

The appointment of nine additional teachers in the same year indicated that the Itinerant Teacher Service had been recognized as contributing positively to education in isolated areas of the State. This recognition was accompanied by a reorganization of the system to promote greater effectiveness and efficiency:

> *The work of the Itinerant Teachers has now been thoroughly systematized by the Department; the districts have been rearranged; codes of instruction have been issued to the teachers; and a proper method of tracing children in need of instruction has been instituted.*[8]

The year 1909 was the year in which the Itinerant Teacher Service changed from an experimental programme to an operational programme and Table I gives details of the service in that year.

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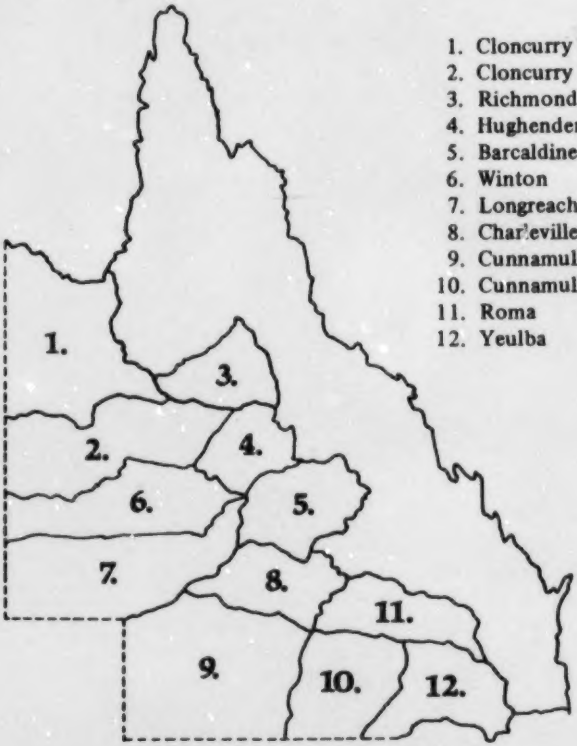
7. ibid.
8. ibid.

DIAGRAM I

ITINERANT TEACHER DISTRICTS AT THE COMMENCEMENT OF 1909



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8. Queensland Parliament, "33rd Report of the Secretary for Public Instruction for the Year 1908", *Queensland Parliamentary Papers 1909*. p. 8.

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TABLE I

DETAILS OF THE ITINERANT TEACHER SERVICE IN 1909

Name of District	Approx. Area Sq. Miles	Distance Travelled Miles	Children Visited	Once	Twice	Thrice	Four Times	Five Times	Families Visited for First Time
Charleville	25,000	2,400	167	25	33	1	–	–	55
Winton	27,000	2,306	70	8	7	6	9	–	18
Cunnamulla West	68,000	4,017	134	17	22	6	6	–	22
Richmond	30,000	1,599	46	8	5	2	–	–	7
Hughenden	11,260	2,974	90	12	12	20	5	–	33
Longreach	35,000	2,770	84	9	9	16	4	–	13
Yeulba	23,985	2,788	78	4	3	4	10	5	17
Cunnamulla East	28,851	3,115	146	12	14	15	15	2	55
Roma	17,000	1,866	148	25	17	2	9	–	49
Barcaldine	29,000	3,889	82	12	19	5	–	–	22
Cloncurry I	16,128	2,287	94	26	6	5	6	1	7
Cloncurry II	60,000	2,761	115	13	24	7	–	–	40
TOTALS	371,224	32,805	1,254	171	171	89	64	8	338

10

3. REACHING A PEAK

Four more Itinerant Teachers were appointed in 1911 and in the following year, one more assumed duty. The total number was now seventeen. In his report to Parliament in 1913, the Secretary for Public Instruction, Mr Blair, stated that he hoped to have three more teachers travelling through isolated areas of Queensland in 1915:

> *To make this branch of the Department's work still more effective, I hope to have three additional Itinerant Teachers appointed in 1915, if funds are available.*[11]

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10. Queensland Parliament, "34th Report of the Secretary for Public Instruction for the Year 1909", *Queensland Parliamentary Papers 1910*. p. 8.

11. Queensland Parliament, "38th Report of the Secretary for Public Instruction for the Year 1913", *Queensland Parliamentary Papers 1914*. Vol. 1.

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Itinerant teacher (D. Patulla) and his boy helper.

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Apparently funds were not forthcoming as the following statement, made in 1916, shows:

> *Under normal conditions there are seventeen districts worked by Itinerant Teachers.* [12]

World War I took its toll on the Itinerant Teacher Service via its members enlisting for military service:

> *Since the outbreak of war in 1914, the number of Itinerant Teachers has varied, some having enlisted for military service. It has been found impracticable to maintain regularly the full strength of itinerant staff. In 1915, there were thirteen Itinerant Teachers' Districts in active operation; in 1916, this number was reduced to twelve; in 1917, fourteen districts were provided with teachers during the whole or some part of the year.* [13]

Fourteen districts also operated in 1918, but with the cessation of the War in this year, the number increased to sixteen in the succeeding year. Table II provides details of the service in 1919.

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12. Queensland Parliament, "41st Report of the Secretary for Public Instruction for the Year 1917", *Queensland Parliamentary Papers 1918.* Vol. 1, p. 7.

13. Queensland Parliament, "42nd Report of the Secretary for Public Instruction for the Year 1920", *Queensland Parliamentary Papers 1921.* Vol. 1, p. 7.

TABLE II

DETAILS OF THE ITINERANT TEACHER SERVICE IN 1919

Name of District	Approx. Area Sq. Miles	Distance Travelled Miles	No. of Children Visited	No. of families Visited	Once	Twice	Thrice	Four Times	Five Times	Six Times	Seven Times	Av. No. of Visits
Camooweal	45,000	4,679	113	50	19	18	12	1	"	"	"	1.9
Croydon	37,000	"	(incorporated with Districts 3 and 4)									
Mackinlay	30,000	2,802	95	43	12	13	16	2	"	"	"	2.2
Pentland	20,000	4,212	84	42	10	11	7	6	6	2	"	2.8
Richmond	35,000	5,597	99	50	17	23	9	1	"	"	"	1.8
Muttaburra	35,000	5,386	89	45	15	13	7	5	2	1	"	2.2
Jericho	13,000	3,205	102	36	20	12	4	"	"	"	"	1.6
Winton	35,000	4,726	67	30	7	3	17	3	"	"	"	2.5
Blackall	40,000	3,354	88	42	22	7	9	6	"	"	"	1.8
Augathella	20,000	4,288	146	64	7	57	"	"	"	"	"	1.9
Birdsville	35,000	2,400	84	38	10	8	16	4	"	"	"	2.4
Eromanga	60,000	6,033	191	81	16	31	31	3	"	"	"	2.3
Cunnamulla	40,000	2,873	101	44	27	11	2	4	"	"	"	1.6
St. George	28,000	7,769	197	95	23	23	46	3	"	"	"	2.3
Taroom	20,000	2,965	89	48	13	16	9	9	1	"	"	2.4
Goondiwindi	15,000	6,800	233	89	16	19	15	12	17	4	6	3.3
Clermont	28,000	"	No regular Service during the year; no report									
TOTALS	536,000	67,089	1,778	803	234	265	200	59	26	7	6	2.3

[14]

In 1920, an additional teacher was appointed:

> *It was found necessary to reorganize the Cunnamulla and Taroom Districts, and to appoint an additional Itinerant Teacher. A new district (Taroom II) was constituted, embracing the western portion of Taroom (No. 15) and the northern portion of Cunnamulla District (No. 15)*[15]

14. Queensland Parliament, "44th Report of the Secretary for Public Instruction for the Year 1919", *Queensland Parliamentary Papers 1920.* Vol. 1, p. 7.

15. Queensland Parliament, "45th Report of the Secretary for Public Instruction for the Year 1920", *Queensland Parliamentary Papers 1921.* Vol. 1, p. 7.

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By 1921, the number of districts operating stood at eighteen. Table III provides details of the service in this year.

TABLE III

DETAILS OF THE ITINERANT TEACHER SERVICE IN 1921

Official No. of District	Name of District	Approx. Area Sq. Miles	Distance Travelled Miles	No. of Children Visited	No. of Families Visited	Once	Twice	Thrice	Four Times	Five Times	Six Times	Seven Times	Av. No. of Visits
1	Camooweal	45,000	3,760	80	34	10	19	4	1	"	"	"	1.9
2	Croydon	37,000	(incorporated with districts 3 and 4)										
3	Mackinlay	39,000	3,061	114	59	11	37	6	5	"	"	"	2.1
4	Pentland	25,000	2,977	85	34	11	8	12	3	"	"	"	2.2
5	Richmond	45,000	4,284	99	73	21	47	5	"	"	"	"	1.8
6	Muttaburra	35,000	3,500	118	62	11	31	12	6	1	1	"	2.3
7	Jericho	20,000	4,107	109	37	14	20	2	1	"	"	"	1.6
8	Winton	35,000	4,821	53	30	5	4	19	2	"	"	"	2.6
9	Blackall	10,000	2,601	93	51	7	15	25	4	"	"	"	2.5
10	Augathella	18,000	5,860	148	66	4	60	2	"	"	"	"	2.0
11	Birdsville	35,000	2,208	64	34	6	8	20	"	"	"	"	2.4
12	Eromanga	60,000	3,877	177	76	28	42	6	"	"	"	"	1.7
13	Cunnamulla	40,000	3,467	81	35	10	16	8	1	"	"	"	2.0
14	St. George	21,000	3,325	143	64	11	18	30	4	"	1	"	2.5
15	Taroom (I)	16,000	5,267	84	38	3	4	5	5	17	3	1	4.1
16	Goondiwindi	15,000	4,600	205	80	16	22	23	19	"	"	"	2.6
17	Clermont	28,000	2,932	59	29	10	13	3	1	2	"	"	2.0
18	Taroom (II)	21,000	3,877	177	76	28	42	6	"	"	"	"	1.7
TOTALS		545,000	64,355	1,889	878	206	406	188	52	20	5	1	2.3

[16]

The Itinerant Teacher Service reached the peak of its development in 1921. After this, slowly at first, but then rapidly, it declined and soon went out of existence. The Primary Correspondence School was the "culprit".

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16. Queensland Parliament, "46th Report of the Secretary for Public Instruction for the Year 1921", *Queensland Parliamentary Papers 1922*. Vol. 1, p. 7.

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4. THE DECLINE

During the period under discussion, lessons by correspondence were being experimented with in New South Wales and Western Australia. In 1921, the Queensland Secretary for Public Instruction, Mr J. Huxham, sent the Acting Chief Inspector, Mr B. McKenna, to Sydney to study the scheme. Mr McKenna's report convinced Mr Huxham that there was a future for tuition by correspondence in the State:

> *I therefore caused enquiries to be made regarding another experiment which has been operating in New South Wales and Western Australia. A special report was prepared by Mr B. McKenna (now Acting Inspector) who, during a visit to Sydney in October, made detailed inquiry into the working of Correspondence Tuition there adopted. The report satisfied me that the system of Postal Tuition was worthy of experiment, and immediate steps were taken to proceed with a similar organisation*[17]

Tuition by post became operational in January 1922 and was directed towards those children who were so isolated that it was virtually impossible for Itinerant Teachers to reach them.

By the end of 1922, the number of active Itinerant Teacher Districts had been reduced to sixteen. The children from the closed districts transferred to the Primary Correspondence School. In the following year, the children from two more districts commenced to take their lessons by correspondence. By the end of 1924, the number of districts had further declined to eleven. In each of the years 1925, 1927 and 1928, one more district was made redundant by the Primary Correspondence School. Table IV shows the extent of and gives details of the Itinerant Teacher Service in 1928.

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17. ibid

TABLE IV

DETAILS OF THE ITINERANT TEACHER SERVICE IN 1928

Official No. of District	Name of District	Approx. Area Sq. Miles	Distance Travelled Miles	No. of Children Visited	No. of Families Visited	Once	Twice	Thrice	Four Times	Five Times	Six Times	Seven Times	Av. No. of Visits
1	Camooweal	45,000	8,076	105	45	4	10	24	7	"	"	"	2.7
4	Pentland	25,000	2,764	83	31	"	"	2	19	3	"	"	3.5
6	Muttaburra	35,000	7,847	153	80	14	9	27	9	12	2	"	3.0
8	Winton	100,000	8,451	193	109	109	30	6	1	1	"	"	1.4
14	St. George	22,000	5,161	148	76	14	24	14	15	3	1	3	2.7
16	Goondiwindi	15,000	5,000	170	58	11	14	23	5	3	2	"	2.7
17	Clermont	28,000	4,377	78	38	10	17	8	3	"	"	"	2.1
18	Taroom	21,000	4,431	100	48	5	11	7	17	2	5	1	3.4
TOTAL		291,000	46,107	1,030	485	167	122	111	76	24	10	4	2.7

18

In 1929, one more district "fell victim" to the Primary Correspondence School and this was followed by three more in the succeeding year. Table V shows the extent of and gives details of the Itinerant Teacher Service in 1930.

18. Queensland Parliament, "53rd Report of the Secretary for Public Instruction for the Year 1928", *Queensland Parliamentary Papers 1929*. Vol. 1. p. 8.

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TABLE V

DETAILS OF THE ITINERANT TEACHER SERVICE IN 1930

Official No. of District	Name of District	Approx. Area Sq. Miles	Distance Travelled Miles	No. of Children Visited	No. of Families Visited	Once	Twice	Thrice	Four Times	Five Times	Six Times	Seven Times	Av. No. of Visits
6	Muttaburra	36,000	7,569	132	69	9	18	25	6	6	6	2	3.2
8	*Winton	100,000	7,070	86	69	58	8	3	"	"	"	"	1.2
14	St. George	22,000	5,745	184	91	20	14	38	10	6	3	"	2.6
18	Taroom	21,000	4,419	134	61	15	8	16	17	4	1	"	2.8
TOTALS		179,000	24,803	538	290	101	48	82	33	16	10	2	2.5

*The Teacher relinquished duty on 11th November, 1930 owing to illness. [19]

The rapid decline of the Itinerant Teacher Service was counterbalanced by the rapid development of the Primary Correspondence School. Table VI shows the extent of the latter's operation in 1929.

TABLE VI

DETAILS OF THE EXTENT OF THE OPERATION OF THE PRIMARY CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOL IN 1929

Quarter Ending	Admitted	Gross Enrolment	Left	Net Enrolment	No. of Teachers on Staff
30th March	705	4,561	646	3,915	71
29th June	643	4,558	388	4,170	73
28th September	550	4,720	418	4,302	75
28th December	282	4,582	274	4,308	76

[20]

19. Queensland Parliament, "55th Report of the Secretary for Public Instruction for the Year 1930", *Queensland Parliamentary Papers 1931*. Vol. 1.

20. Queensland Parliament, "54th Report of the Secretary for Public Instruction for the Year 1929", *Queensland Parliamentary Papers 1930*. Vol. 1. p. 8.

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There was no mention of the Itinerant Teacher Service in the Reports to Parliament[21] by the Secretary for Public Instruction in 1932 and succeeding years. It is a valid assumption then, that soon after 1930, the remaining three districts were absorbed by the Primary Correspondence School.

4. COMMENT

The rise and decline of the Itinerant Teacher Service took approximately three decades. From its modest beginnings at the turn of the century, it reached its peak after approximately twenty years of operation and then faded within the next ten years.

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21. Queensland Parliament, "56th Report of the Secretary for Public Instruction for the Year 1931", *Queensland Parliamentary Papers 1932*. Vol. 1.

Horses being hand-fed in dry times.

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CHAPTER II

OPERATION OF THE ITINERANT TEACHER SERVICE

1. COMPULSORY EDUCATION

The institution of the Itinerant Teacher Service did not mean that all children in the State were receiving some form of education, as even when it reached its peak, there were still families in very remote areas that the travelling teachers could not reach.

Itinerant Teachers were concerned solely with primary education. As will be shown in the following chapter, the children instructed by these men did not reach the educational standards of their counterparts in state and provisional schools, and this in itself is, I believe, sufficient explanation why secondary school instruction was not attempted.

At the turn of the current century, the law relative to compulsory school attendance was as follows:

> *As the law at present stands, school attendance for sixty days in the half-year will free parents from prosecution, and children who have reached the age of twelve years are exempt.*[22]

The law applied to children who lived within reasonable reach of a school. However, the same compulsion did exist between children of school age and Itinerant Teachers. Support for this statement may be found in the following extract from a letter written by the Under Secretary for Public Instruction to a Mrs Thomson who resided in the Winton Itinerant Teacher's District in 1920:

> *I have to request you to be good enough to inform me whether you will undertake to see that your children carry out any reasonable instructions given by the Itinerant Teacher or whether you wish him to discontinue his visits.* [23]

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22. 25th Report, *op. cit*, p. 6.

23. Queensland Archive File, "Itinerant Teacher Service, District 8 Correspondence 1920–1922."

Support may also be found in another extract taken from a letter to the Under Secretary from Mr D.E. McKenzie, Itinerant Teacher in the Winton District:

> *I called on Mr Cragg, . . . , as instructed by the Department. He does not wish to have his children taught as they constantly suffer from bad eyes, and he thinks reading may make them worse.* [24]

2. MODE OF OPERATION

Throughout the year, Itinerant Teachers tried to visit each family in their districts, as many times as possible. On occasions, they visited a family as many as seven times during the same year, but this was the rare exception rather than the rule. Many families were visited on only one occasion each year. The average number of visits was two or three.

During each visit, the Itinerant Teacher would set out a programme of instruction for each child, correct work done since the previous visit and also give tuition:

> *The number of effective teaching hours spent with each family varied from five to fifteen hours, this time including actual direct tuition, inspection of work done during the period which has elapsed between visits, setting out prospective work and giving advice to relatives who supervise and assist the children.*[25]

The time spent with each family varied according to the number of children in the family and the progress made since the previous visit.

After the travelling teacher had made his visit and set courses of instruction, an adult assumed the role of "teacher" by assisting the children, by making sure that they did their school work and by carrying out any instructions left by the teacher. The following extracts from the reports of Itinerant Teachers show the variety of people who performed this supervisory role:

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24. ibid.
25. 46th Report, *op.cit.* p. 22.

The children will in future be instructed by the daughter of a neighbouring selector.[26]

Hilda M. Winks, aged 18, has undertaken to give her brothers and sisters all the instruction she can.[27]

The parents of these children are qualified to give the necessary instruction.[28]

The father will direct their studies at night, when at home, and an elder sister will see to and supervise their work during the day.[29]

Mr Clancby, at much personal sacrifice, employs an elderly gentleman to teach the younger children.[30]

Mrs and Miss Dickson, the wife and daughter of the manager of the run, have been teaching these children. These ladies will attend gratuitously to the education of all the children on the run.[31]

The parents inform me, as do the governesses, that they have no trouble to get the prescribed work done before the next regular visit.[32]

The role of "amateur teacher" then, was performed by neighbours, parents, elder children, managers' wives and daughters, governors and governesses, in fact anyone who was willing and capable of carrying out the task. However, in general, it was mothers and older children who performed the task.

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26. 25th Report, *op.cit.* p. 3.
27. ibid.
28. ibid.
29. ibid. p. 6.
30. ibid. p. 7.
31. ibid.
32. Queensland Parliament, "35th Report of the Secretary for Public Instruction for the Year 1910", *Queensland Parliamentary Papers 1911–1912*. p. 9.

The travelling teacher's approach to the children he visited was a kindly one, in fact, the Department for Public Instruction insisted on it. In 1920, Itinerant Teacher, Mr D.E. McKenzie[33] of the Winton district advised the Department that he had refused to visit a particular family because the mother had objected to his caning her children for having done little or no work since his last visit. The following extract from the Department's reply clearly shows its attitude towards corporal punishment and Itinerant Teachers:

> *I have to point out that Regulation 113 does not authorise Itinerant Teachers to administer corporal punishment . . . It is not considered advisable, even if it were lawful, that Itinerant Teachers should depend upon corporal punishment to support their authority. Their work lies mainly among bush children, who, it is hoped, look forward with pleasure to the teacher's visit, and whose co-operation should be gained by quite other means than by the threat of infliction of corporal punishment.*[34]

Each year, before commencing their rounds, Itinerant Teachers were required to forward to the Department for Public Instruction a proposed programme of work for the year. This included the anticipated number of visits to each home, the time to be spent on each visit and the time that would be spent in travelling between homesteads. In addition, they had to supply a map of their district and a list of parents showing the numbers of their children, their places of abode and the distance of each home from the one previous to it on the list.[35]

Each week, Itinerant Teachers had to forward a diary of their week's activities to the Department. It was a requirement that they record and give reasons for any departure from their proposed programme of work:

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33. Queensland Archive File, *op.cit.*

34. Queensland Archive File, *op.cit.*

35. Queensland Archive File, "Itinerant Teacher Service, Programmes of Work 1915–1916".

I have to inform you that, whenever you omit a visit to a family or depart from the order of visits as given in your programme of work for the year, you should mention the fact and give the reason in your weekly diary in the appropriate place.[36]

At the end of each school year, the travelling teachers had to submit an Annual Report summarizing their activities for the year and commenting upon the progress of the children visited.

While they were on their rounds, Itinerant Teachers were constantly on the look-out for new families that may have moved into their districts. In their weekly diaries, they advised the Department of recent arrivals while, at the same time, they sought permission to vary their itineraries so that they could visit such families. The decision relative to whether a teacher visited a family or not was taken by the Department. Evidence for this is contained in a reply to a letter from Itinerant Teacher, McKenzie:

I have also to point out that the question as to whether you visit certain families or not is not one for your decision.[37]

From what has been written thus far, the reader may have gained the impression that the only families visited by Itinerant Teachers were property owners and their employees. This was not so as a much wider spectrum of bush-dweller was visited:

The children whom they try to reach are those belonging to selectors, graziers, stockmen, boundary-riders, grooms, fencers, carriers, timber-getters, fossickers and the like. [38]

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36. Queensland Archive File, "Itinerant Teacher Service, District I Correspondence 1912–1919". (Letter from J.D. Storey, Under Secretary for the Dept of Public Instruction to R.D. Ferry, Cloncurry District, 1914).
37. Queensland Archive File, Dist 8, *op.cit.*
38. 32nd Report, *op.cit.*, p. 10.

3. MODES OF TRANSPORT AND EQUIPMENT CARRIED

In making their rounds, the Itinerant Teachers used various modes of transport. In the early years, the most popular form was the horse and buggy and towards the end of the era, the motor cycle and the motor car became popular means of conveyance. Other means of transport used included horseback, coach, train, bicycle, foot and motor cycle with side-car. One Itinerant Teacher even recorded, on his sketch-map for the year, a distance of 147 miles to be travelled by camel.[39] The horse and buggy, the motor cycle and the motor car were used most frequently as the travelling teacher had to carry a large amount of luggage and equipment. The other modes of transport were only used for short trips where the buggy, the car or the cycle could not be used. These would have been impractical for regular use as they could not carry the necessary equipment.

The usual equipment carried was: a tent to sleep in while on the track (accommodation was normally provided in homesteads if the travelling teachers reached them before nightfall); a hurricane lantern (imagine the difficulty in writing the weekly diary with this form of lighting); various school requisites including text-books, reading books, slates, copy books and so on; supplies of the "School Paper"; feed for horses in dry times (if horse and buggy used); extra gallons of petrol (if motor cars or cycles used); bedding; food; and cooking utensils.

To assist them with menial tasks, Itinerant Teachers were permitted to employ a boy whose duty it was to assist with packing, unpacking, feeding of horses and perhaps, cooking.

4. AND DISTRICT INSPECTORS

In an effort to monitor standards of achievement of the children taught by Itinerant Teachers, District Inspectors visited and tested pupils whenever possible:

District Inspectors, when opportunity offers, test the

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39. Queensland Archive File, Programmes of Work, *op.cit.*

proficiency of pupils taught by these teachers, and their reports show that good work is being done.[40]

5. COMMENT

It is obvious that the visiting carried out by Inspectors was limited and generally, the travelling teacher was a "free agent" and the success of the system depended upon the honesty and devotion to duty of the men who performed its work and upon the home supervisors who supported them. Frequently, the conditions under which they carried out their work were far from ideal.

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40. Queensland Parliament, "52nd Report of the Secretary for Public Instruction for the Year 1927", *Queensland Parliamentary Papers 1928*, Vol. 1. p. 8.

Children welcoming the itinerant teacher.

CHAPTER III

CONTRIBUTION TO EDUCATION OF THE ITINERANT TEACHER SERVICE

1. INTRODUCTION

Chapters One and Two have traced the history of the Itinerant Teacher Service and described its operation in practice. In Chapter Three, an attempt is made to assess its contribution to Queensland education during the early years of this century. Such an assessment is subject to some limitations because of the nature of the materials researched, but nevertheless, it is felt that a reasonably accurate "picture" may be built up.

2. THE QUALITY OF THE MEN

As stated in the concluding paragraph of Chapter Two, much of the success of the Itinerant Teacher Service depended upon the devotion to duty and the quality of its employees. What type of men then, were appointed to these positions? An advertisement for an Itinerant Teacher in 1922 listed the following as desirable attributes for effectively fulfilling the office:

> *Applications for appointment to the position of an Itinerant Teacher are invited from teachers. Preference will be given to an applicant who is unmarried, and who can claim to have had some experience in the handling of horses and in bushcraft generally.*[41]

In 1912, Mr R.D. Ferry, when applying for the position of Itinerant Teacher in the Cloncurry district stated:

> *I am well used to horses, can ride and drive, and have had country experience. My general health is good and I feel that I would be able to discharge the duties efficiently.*[42]

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41. Department for Public Instruction, *Education Office Gazette*, February, 1922.

42. Queensland Archive File, "Itinerant Teacher Service, District I Correspondence 1912–1919".

Mr Ferry was subsequently appointed to the position. The men chosen, especially in the early years, required a knowledge of horses and in the later years, a knowledge of motor cars and cycles. A knowledge of the bush was essential as was good health while the absence of family responsibilities must have been an advantage. These attributes were necessary so that the men chosen could successfully bear the lonely and difficult life of travelling the outback.

Mr A.H. Barlow, the Secretary for Public Instruction stated in 1908:

> *The success of the system will depend very largely upon the men chosen as teachers; they must be thoroughly trustworthy and possessed of tact and resource.*[43]

The following paragraphs show that generally such men were selected for these positions.

The Queensland Archive files containing Itinerant Teachers' correspondence give many examples of teachers working on holidays, week-ends and during vacations so that they could carry out their duties more effectively by making more frequent visits to their pupils. If they worked during the mid-winter and Easter vacations, they were permitted to add the number of days worked to their mid-summer vacations. If they worked on public holidays or week-ends, they were not paid for these nor were they permitted to add these to their mid-summer vacations.[44]

Besides teaching or travelling on public holidays and week-ends, many repairs to buggies and cars which the teachers carried out themselves were done on these days.

> *During over two years, I have hardly lost seven days from car trouble, not because the car is any good, but because I carry so many spares and tools and do most of the reparis in my own time and on Sundays.*[45]

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43. 32nd Report, *op.cit.*, p. 10.

44. Queensland Archive Files, District I and 8, *op.cit.*

45. District 8, *op.cit.*

Practically all my spare time is taken up with repair work.[46]

Men, less devoted to duty, would not have enacted such work in their spare time or on week-ends. They would have reserved these for "office hours". Itinerant Teachers then, were generous with their spare time in attempting to bring schooling to children in the outback.

3. PHYSICAL HARDSHIPS

The work of Itinerant Teachers was hampered by several hardships over which they had no control. Chief amongst these were the weather and the undeveloped nature of the country they traversed. Quite often, the successful performance of their duties was in the "lap of the Gods". Droughts and floods frequently prevented the travelling teachers from completing their rounds as planned:

Owing to the dry state of the road and difficulty of obtaining feed for horses, I thought it advisable not to proceed in the direction of Camooweal.[47]

I am unable to proceed to Lotus Vale Station and Karumba again this year. To do so would necessitate travelling approximately six hundred miles before the end of the year. With my horses in their present condition this is impossible.[48]

Floods prevented my visiting them.[49]

Weather conditions will also have an important bearing upon the work of Itinerant Teachers. When it is excessively wet and the creeks are in flood the teachers will not be able to travel; and in times of drought they have difficulty in travelling, owing to the scarcity of feed and water for their horses.[50]

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46. ibid.
47. Queensland Archive Files, District 1, *op.cit.*
48. ibid.
49. Queensland Archive File, "Itinerant Teacher Service, The Annual Reports of the Itinerant Teachers for the Year 1914".
50. 32nd Report, *op.cit.*, p. 10.

It was the delays caused by conditions such as those above that prompted the Department for Public Instruction to experiment with the motor car as a possible replacement for horses and buggies. In flooded conditions, the car was not an improvement on the horse, in fact, often its progress was more limited. At first glance, it would seem that cars would have been more effective than buggies in drought conditions as supplies of petrol, unlike horse-feed, were not dependent upon good climatic conditions. This was true, but there was another important variable. During times of drought, the roads deteriorated causing heavier wear and tear on cars, more frequent repairs and consequently, greater loss of time.

> *Notwithstanding that motor cars and motor cycles have been employed in eight out of the seventeen existent Itinerant Districts as the means of conveying the teachers from place to place, the number of visits has not sensibly increased, the chief obstacles being long intervening distances and climatic conditions making travelling impossible.*[51]

Throughout the era of the Itinerant Teacher Service, no effective solution to the problems presented by the weather and the harsh conditions of the outback were found. The work of these men was continually complicated by the physical hardships of the "bush".

4. THE PARENTS

The illiteracy of some of the parents of the children they visited was a further difficulty encountered by Itinerant Teachers, as was the lack of interest shown by others. Fortunately the latter type were in the minority. Typical statements made by the travelling teachers about the above types of parents were:

> *This is a pitiful case, as the husband and wife are unable to help the children on account of neither being able to write or cipher.*[52]

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51. 46th Report, *op.cit.* p. 22.
52. 33rd Report, *op.cit.* p. 9.

These children, unfortunately, have no instructor; their father is unable to assist them as he is almost blind. They were at one time given a little instruction by the mother, but she has now been dead for some time. A neighbour, five miles away, has promised to look after their work about once each week.[53]

The parents take no interest whatever in this work.[54]

In cases where parents could not help their children, the travelling teachers assisted by arranging for a competent person to do so. Of course, the success of this depended upon the attitude of the parents. In cases where the parents showed no interest in their children's education, apart from performing the role of "educational missionary" and attempting to alter the parents' attitudes, there was little the teacher could do.

Generally, outback parents did want schooling for their children. The Archive Files contain numerous examples of letters from parents to the Department for Public Instruction, requesting assistance in the education of their children. They sought books, requisites and materials, and money. Some wanted the Department to pay part salaries of governesses and others wanted materials to start their own private schools. The following extract from a parent's letter was typical of such requests:

I am writing to ask you if you could give me assistance. I am a miner with a large family of 7 children 6 ready for school and living in the bush the nearest school is twelve or thirteen miles away at Glassford Creek and as I cannot afford to keep and pay a teacher or send my children away if you could give me assistance with a teacher I should be very glad as it is very hard to see ones children growing up without a bit of education is so hard to get work with so many to keep when you have been lucky enough to get work you have to keep it, hoping you will be able to grant my petition.[55]

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53. ibid.

54. ibid.

55. Queensland Archive File, "Itinerant Teacher Service, Assistance to Parents".

All such requests for aid were refused by the Department for Public Instruction on the grounds that they did not wish to create a precedent. Such a precedent could have become very burdensome once news of it began to spread throughout the outback. A typical Departmental reply to letters requesting aid was:

> *In acknowledging the receipt of your letter of the 17th instant, I have the honour, by direction, to inform you that the Minister regrets that he has no power under the Regulations of the Department to grant your request for assistance towards the education of your children.* [56]

The Department would follow-up such a letter by advising the appropriate Itinerant Teacher of the existence of the family and the teacher would then make every effort to visit the family.

The evidence suggests then, that in general, there was a genuine desire by "bush" families to have their children educated. The Itinerant Teacher Service existed for this reason. In the next section, how successfully this desire was met will be examined.

5. SATISFYING THE EDUCATIONAL DESIRES OF OUTBACK PARENTS

In the annual reports made by Itinerant Teachers, there are numerous extracts that indicate the high regard in which the Service was held by outback families.

> *The parents are particularly pleased that they have received a visit of an Itinerant Teacher. It has made the mother now feel quite content in her isolated home.* [57]

> *These people intend to grasp the opportunity of educating their children, and feel very grateful.* [58]

> *In almost every case the people were quite pleased to find that some provision had at least been made for the education of their children.* [59]

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56. ibid.
57. 33rd Report, *op.cit.* p. 9.
58. ibid.
59. 34th Report, *op.cit.* p. 8.

The parents, and also the other people residing in my district, speak exceedingly well of the system, and always urge the Teacher to remain longer, to enable the children to gain as much knowledge as possible.[60]

The parents are loud in their praise of the system, the results of which have been extremely beneficial.[61]

The people of the district are very pleased with the system of Education but regret that the I.T. cannot visit the families more frequently.[62]

The only criticism of the service appears to have been that visits were not frequent enough. Of course, there was the minority who were not interested in the service or their children's schooling.

In the performance of their duties, Itinerant Teachers were assisted by many members of the community:

The Itinerant Teachers speak with gratitude of the kindness and generous hospitality shown to them by station-owners, mine managers, land agents, members of the Police Force and others. Each and all did what was possible to make the lot of the Itinerant Teacher more pleasant and to assist him in his work.[63]

This assistance rendered to the travelling teachers does suggest an acceptance of the efforts being made by these men. If these "bush" people generally were not satisfied with the type of service that these people were giving, then they may not have been so ready to render them assistance.

It does seem then that the Itinerant Teacher Service was held in high regard by isolated families and that it was generally accepted by the wider community. It does not follow however, that because people were happy with the service it was necessarily effective. I now propose to examine this latter aspect.

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60. ibid.
61. 35th Report, *op.cit.* p. 9.
62. Queensland Archive Files, Annual Reports, *op.cit.*
63. 34th Report, *op.cit.* p. 10.

6. EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SERVICE

In their annual reports, Itinerant Teachers have indicated on many occasions, how they were able to effect improvement in the standards of education within their districts:

> *It is remarkable to see a family in a lonely two-roomed hut; neither parent can read nor write; the children have been visited by an Itinerant Teacher in 1908; by me, this year. These children (two) can read well, and the elder one does the shopping – by post.*[64]

> *In almost every case I have found marked improvement, and in no cases have I found children who have not benefited by visits of the teacher.*[65]

> *When the disadvantages of the children and the parents are considered, the results obtained prove conclusively that the efforts of the Department in affording the bush children an opportunity of receiving a little education are appreciated.*[66]

In his report to parliament in 1912, the Secretary for Public Instruction, Mr K.M. Grant stated:

> *To encourage the children to persevere with their lessons and to ascertain how the copy-books, exercises etc. of bush children compare with the work of the children taught in the ordinary country schools, several of the Itinerant Teachers have entered the work of their pupils in the local shows with a fair measure of success . . . some of the pupils of one of the Itinerant Teachers had gained several first and second prizes at the Roma Show for written work.*

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64. ibid. p. 9.

65. ibid.

66. 35th Report, *op.cit.* p. 9.

An itinerant teacher and his boy assistant.

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These successes are gratifying to the Department inasmuch as they furnish proof that the Itinerant Teacher is serving a useful purpose.[67]

A further example of the standard of work produced by Itinerant Teachers was given by the Secretary for Public Instruction, Mr M.T. Wilson, in his 1928 report to parliament:

District Inspectors, when opportunity offers, test the proficiency of pupils taught by these teachers, and their reports show that good work is being done.[68]

Comments such as those made by Itinerant Teachers in preceding paragraphs, the success of their pupils in open competition with state and provisional school children at local shows, and the reports of District Inspectors indicate that the Itinerant Teacher Service did maintain a reasonable standard of education and indeed, raised the standard of education in isolated areas.

However, though children educated by the Itinerant Teacher System were able to "hold their own" with children from state and provisional schools in exhibiting written work in country shows, it does not follow that all subjects taught were of a comparable standard with those taught in country schools. There is no record of any of the Itinerant Teachers' pupils having passed the Scholarship Examination, and this is understandable as not all subjects were taught successfully under the system. English, particularly reading and writing, was taught most successfully. Basic mathematics was reasonably well taught, but advanced mathematics was not so well done. History and geography met with the least success. The fact that these were not as successful as English is due to the isolation and the limited experiences of these "bush" children.

In 1907, Mr A.H. Barlow, Secretary for Public Instruction reported to parliament:

By this means the children are at least taught to read, to write and to cipher.[69]

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67. ibid.

68. 52nd Report, *op.cit.*

69. 31st Report, *op.cit.* p. 10.

The work done by the teachers and the children is, on the whole satisfactory. Reading and writing show the best results, but fair work is being done in arithmetic. [70]

In 1914, Itinerant Teacher, G.J. O'Sullivan applied to the Department for a series of pamphlets dealing with Queensland that were issued by the Queensland Railways. In his application, he stated:

The Geography of Australia supplied – Angus and Robertson's – is unsuitable. The majority of children are not under the itinerant teacher's supervision long enough to get more than a knowledge of Queensland, and this is often very superficial. There are a number of pamphlets issued by the Railway Department for the information of tourists which I am told treat of Queensland in general. [71]

He asked that he be permitted to use these instead of the Geography text-book. The request was granted and instruction and provision was made for the Railway Department to forward to Mr O'Sullivan the following pamphlets:

Tours on the Darling Downs;
Tours in the Cairns District;
Tours in the Central District;
Tours in the Mackay District;
Tours on the North Coast; and
Holiday Resorts. [72]

This was recognition by the Department of the low standard in Geography and it shows its willingness to experiment in an attempt to effect some improvement.

The Itinerant Teacher Service did afford isolated parents and children direct contact with a member of the Department for Public Instruction:

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70. ibid. p. 17.

71. Queensland Archive Files, "Itinerant Teacher Service, Letter from G.J. O'Sullivan, Normanton, 6 July, 1914."

72. Queensland Archive Files, "Itinerant Teacher Service, Library Books."

The pupils who are visited occasionally by these teachers have the advantage of personal contact.[73]

There is an assumption here, that contact with a Departmental representative was an advantage. However, it could be argued that the work of these teachers could have been done adequately by the home supervisors. By the same token, it should not be overlooked that supervisors were "amateur teachers" while the travelling teachers were professionals, better educated than their "amateur" counterparts and trained in teaching methods. Though credit is due to the supervisors, it should also be remembered that they, in turn, were coached by the teachers. The teachers' visits were often a motivating force that prompted both supervisors and children to continue with their work when they may have felt inclined "to give up":

The visits of the Itinerant Teacher have enabled the parents to assume control of their children, and his visit is always in their minds.[74]

Though the supervisor's contribution was significant, it nevertheless owed much to the influence of the teachers.

There was always the possibility that children who were taught by Itinerant Teachers may eventually become students at state or provisional schools. Many of these "bush" families demonstrated a tendency for mobility. Because of this, the manner in which children gained their schooling could possibly be affected in two ways. Firstly, a "new" family arriving in a district may result in there being enough children for a provisional school to be established in that area. Secondly, a family may have moved from an area in which there was no school to an area in which there was one. In both cases the work of teachers in such schools was not as difficult as it may have been had there not been an Itinerant Teacher Service. The children thus affected would have had some prior schooling. They would have been able to read and write and do basic arithmetic. If it had not been for the travelling teachers, many of these children would have been virtually illiterate and their teachers would have had "to start from scratch". As it was some educational foundations had been laid. These could be built upon.

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73. 46th Report, *op.cit.* p. 23.

74. 35th Report, *op.cit.* p. 9.

Within limitations then, the Itinerant Teacher Service was effective. It certainly did not produce Rhodes Scholars or even pupils as well educated as those in state or provisional schools, but it did bring a degree of literacy and numeracy to the children of isolated families that they may not have gained otherwise.

7. INDIRECT INFLUENCES OF THE SERVICE

The influence that the Itinerant Teacher Service had on children of school age was a direct one, but it also had an indirect influence on the older children not of school age and on parents. This influence was most significant relative to families that were illiterate or illeducated. The parents and older children were often taught reading, writing and basic arithmetic by the younger children. As well, the parents and older children had access to the books and teaching programmes left by the travelling teachers and were able to improve their educations as a result of having these in their homes:

> *The benefits of the system do not stop at the children assisted by the teacher. These children are able to teach their parents and elder brothers and sisters.*[75]

> *In many homes in remote places or where the parents are but poorly educated, the children's school books constitute the only reading matter. The parents and older members of the family become in time interested in the little one's books and work.*[76]

On their rounds, Itinerant Teachers were constantly on the look-out for possibilities of forming provisional schools in their districts. If they found the number of children necessary for the establishment of a school, they advised parents of the procedures to be followed in applying for the formation of a provisional school. As well, they advised the Department for Public Instruction of the matter. Indeed, this was listed as one of the teacher's duties.

Besides aiding in the establishment of provisional schools, Itinerant Teachers were instrumental in the formation of part-time schools and Saturday schools.

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75. 35th Report, *op.cit.* p. 9.

76. Queensland Archive Files, Annual Reports, *op.cit.*

Heavy going in the vicinity of Doctor's Creek.

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Of the children visited during 1901, 69 were found in attendance at 7 new provisional schools, of which 3 are full time, and 4 half-time. These schools were mainly established as a result of the itinerant teacher's labour.[77]

It is also one of the duties of the Itinerant Teachers to organize groups of children, if it is practicable to do so, with a view to the establishment of part-time schools.[78]

I have endeavoured in certain localities, where circumstances suggested the action, to advise the parents of groups of families to make applications for schools.[79]

Besides contributing towards the general education of the children of isolated families, the Itinerant Teacher Service also contributed towards the health education of such children. They were responsible for checking the incidence of blight, a disease of the eye. They reported cases to the Department for Public Instruction and carried with them the necessary medicines and ointments to cure it. As well, they reported other cases of illhealth that they may have found on their rounds.

Blight has so far disappeared in my district that the supplying of lotion and ointment may now be regarded as a prevention instead of a cure.[80]

On several occasions I was able to administer assistance in the way of first-aid through medium of the medical cabinet.[81]

Besides the obvious direct influence of the Itinerant Teacher Service then, there were influences that were less direct. These included the incidental education of parents and older children and the administering of some aspects of medical assistance to isolated families.

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77. Queensland Parliament, "27th Report of the Secretary for Public Instruction for the Year 1902", *Votes and Proceedings of the Legislative Assemply 1903*, p. 6.

78. 31st Report, *op.cit.*, p. 10.

79. Queensland Archive Files, Annual Reports, *op.cit.*

80. ibid.

81. ibid.

8. THE SERVICE AND THE PRIMARY CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOL

The Primary Correspondence School, slowly at first, and then rapidly, brought about the demise of the Itinerant Teacher Service. Tuition by mail replaced travelling teachers because it offered a more effective system of bringing education to isolated families. For example, lessons by correspondence reached children living on islands and other children who were so isolated that the Itinerant Teachers could not reach them. The Primary Correspondence School put education within the grasp of all children in Queensland.

This new concept of a school operated along the following lines:

> *The work prescribed for each class in a Primary School is divided into weekly portions, carefully graded to suit each individual pupil. Typed copies of instructions, directions, explanations, and illustrations – some intended for the use of parents – are posted each week. The finished written lessons are returned to the Teaching Centre . . .; they are corrected and valued with such comments and advice as seems necessary. There are three sets of papers in circulation at one time – one going out, one in process of study, and one returning for correction. At the end of a term the whole work prescribed in the most essential subjects . . . according to the Primary School syllabus will be completed.*[82]

The major advantage that correspondence tuition had over the Itinerant Teacher Service was that it offered an unbroken, week by week tuition. The travelling teachers could not offer this. As well, correspondence offered a complete tuition in the essential subjects of the primary school syllabus. The Itinerant Teacher Service could not offer this. Some children who studied under the primary correspondence scheme passed the State Scholarship Examination, others passed the High School Entrance Examination and some won scholarships to Gatton Agricultural College:

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82. 46th Report, *op.cit.*, p. 23.

Thirteen out of sixteen were successful in 1925 (in passing the High School Entrance Examination), two of the successful boys also obtaining bursaries to the Gatton Agricultural College. Six candidates sat for the 1925 State Scholarship Examination, and four were successful.[83]

The Itinerant Teacher Service could not claim successes such as these.

The Primary Correspondence School met with rapid success, but this progress would not have been so smooth had the Itinerant Teacher Service never existed. Initially, travelling teachers and home supervisors brought a degree of literacy and numeracy to Queensland's outback, thus making it easier for tuition by correspondence to succeed. Correspondence lessons are oflittle worth if their recipients cannot read. The Itinerant Teacher Service had given its pupils a degree of proficiency in the basic subjects on which the Correspondence School was able to build and improve. As well, travelling teachers were able to convince many parents not interested in education that it was necessary. Generally, within their districts, they created a climate conducive towards education. Had it not been for these men, many parents would not have received correspondence lessons so favourably. Their disinterest in education and/or their illiteracy would have prompted them to disregard such lessons.

9. CONCLUSION

The research conducted in this study has brought forward the following information:

1. To a large degree, the success of the service depended upon the quality of the men chosen as teachers. The indications are that these men performed their functions conscientiously.

2. Itinerant Teachers had to contend with many hardships, namely droughts and floods.

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83. Queensland Parliament, "50th Report of the Secretary for Public Instruction for the Year 1925", *Queensland Parliamentary Papers 1926, Vol. 1.*, p. 9.

3. Further difficulties included the illiteracy of, and the lack of interest of some parents. Generally however, isolated parents wanted an education for their children.

4. Generally, the Service was held in high regard by outback parents and the wider community. The major complaint appears to have been that visits were not frequent enough.

5. Reports by the Secretary for Public Instruction, Inspectors and the Teachers themselves indicate achievements and improvements due to the Service. Reading, writing and basic arithmetic met with the greatest success, while history and geography met with the least. In general, the Itinerant Teachers brought literacy to the "bush".

6. Besides the direct influences of the Service, there were indirect influences. Parents and older children learnt from the younger children and from the books and materials left by the Teachers. As well, the Teachers were instrumental in the formation of provisional, part-time and Saturday schools, and the treatment of minor medical problems.

7. The Itinerant Teacher Service was quite rapidly replaced by the Primary Correspondence School, but the latter's progress would not have been so smooth had much of the "groundwork" not been laid by the former.

The preceding information leads to the conclusion that the Itinerant Teacher Service did play a significant role in rural education, in the early years of Queensland's educational history. It was far from a perfect system, but it did bring a degree of literacy and numeracy to a vast number of isolated children, and it "paved the way" for a more sophisticated system of rural education, the Primary Correspondence School.

Itinerant teacher (J. J. O'Sullivan in the vicinity of Croydon.

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